

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

What is claimed is:

1. (Previously Presented) A low coefficient of thermal expansion cermet material comprising:
a first phase of grains consisting essentially of tungsten carbide (WC); and
a second phase of iron-based binder alloy bonding the first phase of grains together and consisting essentially of a blend of iron with Co, Ni, C and Mn;

wherein the binder alloy comprises in the range of from about 10 to 30 percent by weight cobalt based on the total weight of the binder alloy, wherein the binder alloy comprises in the range of from 10 to 30 percent by weight of the total weight of the cermet material, and wherein the binder alloy has a coefficient of thermal expansion of less than about 10 ppm/°C within a temperature range of from 100 to 700°C.

2. - 6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) The cermet material as recited in claim 1 wherein the iron-based binder alloy comprises in the range of from about 10 to 40 percent by weight Ni based on the total weight of the binder alloy.

8.- 10. (Canceled)

11. (Original) The cermet material as recited in claim 1 wherein the difference between the coefficient of thermal expansion for the binder alloy and the first phase of grains is less than about 5 ppm/°C.

12. (Original) The cermet material as recited in claim 11 wherein the difference between the coefficient of thermal expansion for the binder alloy and the first phase of grains is less than about 2 ppm/°C.

13. (Original) A rock bit comprising a body having a number of legs that extend therefrom, cutting cones rotatably disposed on an end of each leg, a plurality of cutting inserts disposed in the cutting cones, wherein the cutting inserts are formed from the cermet material recited in claim 1.

14. (Previously Presented) A low coefficient of thermal expansion cermet composition comprising:

a first phase of grains consisting essentially of tungsten carbide (WC) ;
and

a second phase of iron-based binder alloy bonding the first phase of grains together and consisting essentially of a mixture of Co, Ni, Fe, C and Mn;

wherein the cermet composition has a coefficient of thermal expansion less than that of conventional WC-Co at the same temperature and having the same metal content at a temperature range of from 100 to 700°C; and

wherein the binder alloy comprises in the range of from about 10 to 30 percent by weight of the total weight of the cermet material, and comprises in the range of from about 10 to 30 percent by weight cobalt based on the total weight of the binder alloy.

15.- 18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) The cermet composition as recited in [any of claims 15, 16, 17, or 18] claim 14 wherein the iron-based binder alloy comprises from about 10 to 40 percent by weight nickel based on the total weight of the binder alloy.

20. (Original) The cermet composition as recited in claim 19 wherein the binder alloy has a coefficient of thermal expansion of less than about 10 ppm/°C within a temperature range of from 100 to 700°C.

21. (Original) The cermet composition as recited in claim 19 wherein the difference between the coefficient of thermal expansion for the binder alloy and the first phase of grains is less than about 2 ppm/°C.

22. - 24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) A low coefficient of thermal expansion cermet material comprising:

a first phase of grains consisting essentially of tungsten carbide (WC); and

a second phase of binder alloy bonding the first phase of grains together and formed from a mixture of metals [selected from the group] consisting [of Co, Ni, Fe, W, Mo, Ti, Ta, V, Nb, C, B, Cr, and Mn] essentially of a blend of iron with Co, Ni, C and Mn; and

a third phase selected from the group of materials consisting of Co, Ni, Fe, W, Mo, Ti, Ta, V, Nb, alloys thereof, and alloys with materials selected from the group consisting of B, Cr, and Mn, wherein the first and second phases form particles that are disbursed within the third phase;

wherein the binder alloy comprises in the range of from 10 to 30 percent by weight of the total weight of the first and second phases; and

wherein the binder alloy has a coefficient of thermal expansion of less than about 10 ppm/°C within a temperature range of from 100 to 700°C.

26. (Original) The cermet material as recited in claim 25 wherein the cermet material has a coefficient of thermal expansion that is less than that of conventional WC-Co at the same temperature and having the same metal binder content.

27. (Original) The cermet material as recited in claim 25 wherein the cermet material has a coefficient of thermal expansion of less than or equal to about 6 ppm/°C within a temperature range of from 100 to 700°C.

28. (Canceled)

29. (Currently Amended) The cermet material as recited in claim 25 wherein the binder alloy [is iron based and] comprises in the range of from about 10 to 30 percent by weight Co, and 10 to 40 percent by weight Ni based on the total weight of the binder alloy.

30. - 31. (Canceled)

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Previously Presented) A rotary cone rock bit comprising:
a body having a number of legs that extend therefrom;
cutting cones rotatably disposed on an end of each leg;
a plurality of cutting inserts disposed in the cutting cones, wherein the cutting inserts are formed from a cermet material comprising a first phase of grains and a second ductile phase bonding the grains, wherein the first phase of grains consists essentially of tungsten carbide (WC), wherein the second ductile phase is an iron-based binder alloy consisting essentially of Co, Ni, Fe, C and Mn;

wherein the binder alloy comprises in the range of from about 10 to 30 percent by weight cobalt based on the total weight of the binder alloy, wherein the binder alloy comprises in the range of from about 10 to 30 percent by weight of the total cermet material, and wherein the binder alloy has a coefficient of thermal expansion less than about 6 ppm/°C within a temperature range of from 100 to 700°C.

34. (Original) The rock bit as recited in claim 33 wherein the difference between the coefficient of thermal expansion for the binder alloy and the first phase of grains is less than about 2 ppm/°C.

35. - 36. (Canceled)

37. (Previously Presented) The rock bit as recited in claim 33 wherein the iron-based binder alloy comprises in the range of from about 10 to 40 percent by weight Ni based on the total weight of the binder alloy.

38. - 40. (Canceled)

41. (Previously Presented) The rock bit as recited in claim 33 wherein the cermet material further comprises a continuous further ductile phase, wherein particles formed from the grains and binder alloy are disbursed therein, the further ductile phase being selected from the group consisting of Co, Ni, Fe, W, Mo, Ti, Ta, V, Nb, B, Cr, Mn and alloys thereof;

wherein the cermet comprising the further ductile phase has a coefficient of thermal expansion less than that of WC-Co at the same temperature and having the same metal content.

42. (Previously Presented) The rock bit as recited in claim 33 wherein the combined WC and binder alloy has a coefficient of thermal expansion that is

less than that of conventional WC-Co at the same temperature and having the same metal content within a temperature range of from 100 to 700°C.

43. (Currently Amended) A low coefficient of thermal expansion cermet composition comprising:

a number of cores comprising a hard material consisting essentially of tungsten carbide (WC) grains that are bonded together with a binder alloy formed from a mixture of metals [selected from the group] consisting [of Co, Ni, Fe, W, Mo, Mn, Cu, Al, Nb, C, Ti, and Ta] essentially of a blend of iron with Co, Ni, C and Mn, the cores forming a first structural phase in the cermet composition; and

a number of shells surrounding at least a portion of the cores, wherein the shells are formed from a binder material that is different from that of the binder alloy; the shells forming a second structural phase in the cermet composition;

wherein the number of cores have a common orientation within the cermet composition;

wherein the binder alloy has a coefficient of thermal expansion less than about 10 ppm/°C within a temperature range of from 100 to 700°C; and

wherein the binder alloy comprises in the range of from about 10 to 30 percent by weight Co, and 10 to 40 percent by weight Ni based on the total weight of the binder alloy, and wherein the binder alloy comprises in the range of from about 10 to 30 percent by weight of the total weight of the cermet material.

44. (Previously Presented) The cermet composition as recited in claim 43 wherein the difference between the coefficient of thermal expansion for the WC and binder alloy is less than about 2 ppm/°C.

45. - 47. (Canceled)